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Vol. 1.

TEACHERS' HELPS.

No. 2.

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THAT BAD BOY

and Other Stories;

OR

How to Manage a School.

By T. C. KARNs,

Late Professor of Philosophy and Pedagogics in
the University of Tennessee.

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1901.

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TO
THE COMMON SCHOOL TEACHER,
UPON WHOM THE HOPE OF HU-
MANITY RESTS, IS THIS LITTLE
BOOK DEDICATED. * * *

PREFACE.

To govern a school successfully is absolutely essential to the teacher's success. This little book is offered as a help in the attainment of this end. It is not proposed as a full treatise on school management, but the author hopes it may be suggestive and helpful to young teachers. If it leads to the further reading of works in the same line, and to the visiting of schools, and conference with most successful teachers, its publication will not have been in vain.

Introduction.

Teachers are plain, usually a plodding sort of people. They are not noted for their convivial habits or their fondness for good fellowship. We rarely hear of such an organization as a teachers' social club. A pedagogical gathering from which anything like "Tales of a Wayside Inn" could go forth would seem especially odd. And yet, I may be pardoned for partially lifting the veil from a story-telling assembly of teachers which, once upon a time, held a series of impromptu meetings. It was during the session of a teachers' institute, or summer school, and the place for the gathering was a quaint old village hotel.

These pedagogues had come from widely different sections of the country, and were possessed of a rich fund of experience. They represented all grades of the profession. In the cool summer evenings after the day's work was done, they assembled informally on the broad piazza of the hotel, and, in turns, told stories of their bad boys, and, perchance, of their good girls. Coming after the regular program of lectures on philosophical pedagogy, nothing seemed more appropriate and instructive. The whole discussion turned on cases of discipline and management. The stories and the remarks which succeeded each, I have attempted to reproduce in the chapters which follow.

CHAPTER I.

Story of Robert.

The first story was told by a prominent teacher of long experience. We shall know him as Mr. Broome. He spoke, in substance, as follows:

"I have taught mainly in cities, and I have had much experience with bad boys. I believe there are more of them in the city than in the country. One case, in particular, I shall never forget. I had charge of a private academy. It was a boys' school and most of my students were the sons of well-to-do and cultivated people. The boys were generally a noble set of fellows. And yet some of them showed a remarkable perversity, when it came to perpetrating mischief of a petty, but very vexatious, character.

• "One of the boys, whom I shall call Robert, gave me a great deal of trouble. His mother was a widow and wealthy. As is usual in such cases, she had spoiled her son by indulgence. She had allowed him to fall in with undesirable associates from whom the boy learned to be idle and self-willed. Naturally he had good impulses, but allowed his desire for amusement to absorb all his thoughts. He delighted to tease animals and play tricks upon other boys in the neighborhood. He had given all his teachers much trouble with various forms of mischief.

"After he entered my school, these traits soon manifested themselves. He still thought much of mischief and little of study. This led him into antagonism with the management of the school. I caught him in many of

his tricks and had to reprimand him severely. Yet he was so sly that, in many cases, he escaped detection.

“One day I was called out of the room for a moment. When I returned, all the boys were coughing violently with their eyes in a lachrymose state which betokened something serious. I was myself not long in perceiving a pungency in the air of the room which made breathing unpleasant. Many students were sneezing, and, as is always the case, certain boys were seized with paroxysms, which were evidently not wholly involuntary.

“ ‘What is the matter?’ said I.

“ ‘Pepper on the stove, Professor,’ replied several of the boys.

“Of course there was no use to ask who put it there, for nobody would have told. By a glance over the room I saw at once that Robert was the guilty person. He was an adept in assuming an air of innocence, but this time he overdid it and betrayed himself.

“At my direction the windows were opened, the stove was brushed off, and the boys soon had the room clear. I thought it best to say nothing further about the matter at that time. So we proceeded with the regular work.

“At intervals, during the rest of the day, I thought the matter over and determined on a line of action. At the close of school, I asked Robert to remain in his seat for a few moments. When we were alone, I charged him with putting the pepper on the stove as before related. He had too much manhood to tell a lie and finally owned up.

“ ‘Robert, what do you suppose I ought to do with you?’ said I. ‘Don’t you think this has been going on long enough? You know I have had a great deal of

trouble with you. I am told it has been the same with your former teachers. You are now a large boy, and it seems to me that your conduct cannot be longer endured. Much as I regret it, I have decided that I must whip you.'

"At this he bristled up and showed a rebellious spirit, saying, 'No teacher can whip me.'

"I kept perfectly cool. 'Well, Robert,' said I, 'that is all right. I should take no pleasure in whipping you. I only have a duty to perform. Since you object, I shall not whip you. There will be no contest between us. I have tried very hard to get along with you and have failed. The only course left me is to send you home to stay.'

"I quietly sat down to write a note to Robert's mother. He sat still and did some thinking, as I expected him to do. The turn of affairs had startled him. When I was through with writing the note, I read it to him. It contained a pleasant allusion to some of his good traits, after narrating the circumstances of his expulsion. I had expressed to his mother my great sorrow for the necessity of this action. I then handed Robert the note and said:

" 'Please take this note to your mother. In hearing it read, you noticed that it explains all. I am very sorry, Robert, but I see no other way. I wish I did. You may go now. Good-bye.'

"The boy picked up his books and started for the door. There he hesitated and stopped. He turned around and said: 'Mr. Broome, I'm not going to take this note to my mother.' He was still hoping for a conflict.

" 'Very well, Robert,' said I. 'You may leave it, and I will send it by a special messenger, or by mail. I

thought you might like to be present when it was received and offer some explanation or excuse.'

"He looked puzzled for a moment, and then passed out the door. He had been gone scarcely a minute when he burst into the room again, crying and begging piteously:

" 'O, Professor Broome, I can't go home this way! It would kill my mother! Please whip me and let me stay! Please whip me!'

"This was a happy moment for the teacher. It was just what I had hoped for.

" 'No; Robert,' I replied, 'I shall not whip you now! That would give me more punishment than it would give you. You now show such a noble spirit that nothing could induce me to think of whipping you. Even more—your mother shall know nothing of this. If you only act right for the future, all will be well.'

"The light broke in upon his consciousness, and Robert was standing in a new relation to the world around him. He had expected punishment and abuse—an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth—but found only kindness instead! All his props for resistance had been knocked from under him, and true manhood at last asserted itself. He could not keep it down.

"I said again, 'Robert, you may go, and God bless you.'

"He passed out, but in a moment stuck his head back through the door, and, in a choking voice, mumbled out, 'Much obliged to you!'

"He remained in school for three years, but I never had any more trouble with Robert."

CHAPTER II.

Discussion of Robert's Case.

At the end of Mr. Broome's story, nearly every teacher present had some comment to make, or some question to ask. With few exceptions, there was unanimous approval of his course with Robert.

One self-important young pedagogue thought he would have "put the bud to the young gentleman," as he expressed it, and conquered him on the spot. This met with a strong murmur of dissent.

"That was the plan in my early day," said a silver-haired veteran, "but it will not pay, boys. It caused endless trouble and generally resulted in crippling, or breaking up, the school. When I was a child at school, the teacher tried to flog one of 'the big boys' for some trivial offense. The fellow resisted and the teacher beat him black and blue with his fist and then pitched him out of the door. The father and two big brothers came to the school-house next day with hickory clubs to whip the teacher in turn. A determined look of the latter, and the fear that he was armed, caused them to desist, but warrants were taken out for the whole crowd and before that teacher was through with it he had paid out one hundred and fifty dollars. The neighborhood was torn in factions and the school went down."

A young lady with a gentle voice spoke next. "As Drummond says, 'Love is the greatest thing in the world.'

To begin with, I don't recognize the bad boy as such. When I enter my school-room on the first day of the term, I treat all pupils as if I expected nothing but good conduct. I say little, or nothing, about it, but I proceed on that basis. At the same time, I try to know who the bad boy is, and by no means do I neglect him. So far as possible, I remove the last vestige of school-room antagonism between pupil and teacher. That antagonism is what makes the trouble. The bad boy will not treat you ill in his mother's parlor, or in any relation, before you assume the attitude of teacher. Why then, should this unnatural strife between teacher and pupil begin as soon as school opens? It is mainly because of the attitude of the teacher towards the pupils. The latter are not approached as they are elsewhere. They should be treated with equal respect and consideration in school, as well as out of it. Their personality and natural rights should be recognized just as carefully. I think the teacher should even ask the pupils pardon for unintentional wrong done him. Courtesy prompts courtesy in return. Justice generates justice. Antagonism also begets antagonism and force begets force. Lay all such aside at once. I do not mean that the teacher should show weakness. The pupils must always feel that there is a reserve power in the teacher which will be wielded justly, if the occasion should demand it."

"That is all as true as gospel," exclaimed a city superintendent "I want that lady in my schools next year. The young teacher needs to learn at once that it is not the strongest muscle that succeeds best with the bad boy. The gentlest, most demure little woman in the school-room sometimes leads him like a lamb. Those who have

read 'The Evolution of Dodd' will recall an instance."

A teacher of some age and experience, and of quiet demeanor, then spoke. "If there is anything that may be called a terror to the teacher," said he, "I think it is the bad boy. And yet I believe there are teachers who enjoy a tussle with him. They like to try their mettle on him and show their prowess in taming the animal, just as a cowboy takes delight from breaking in a bucking broncho. Unfortunately, I never was of that class. The bad boy haunted my consciousness at early morn and dewy eve; of course, with intervals of more or less length. And yet, though coming up, as it were, through great tribulation, I believe I may claim that I managed to get along fairly well, even with the bad boy. The fact that we are distrustful of our powers sometimes causes us to be more careful and strive more diligently for success."

Another teacher very wisely thought that it would take perfection of management to succeed with all cases, and have no trouble at all. "No teacher," said he, "can forestall and avoid all friction. Every teacher has his limitations, and so does every plan and every theory, though the lack of success is more apt to be the teacher's fault. Some teachers give little study to difficult cases. Others have long cultivated such a hostile attitude towards their pupils that their very presence arouses, in every bad boy, a spirit of antagonism. Before the first day of school closes, the enemy is in hostile array. The battle is then fought to a finish, and the result, in some form, is generally against the teacher. Brute force may conquer, but at the expense of much heart-ache, loss of friends, and a weakened school."

"Mr. Broome, I should take you, and the other ad-

vocates of your method, to be disciples of Count Tolstoi, the great Russian philosopher and author."

All eyes were turned in the direction whence these words came. They were spoken by a man of unobtrusive dress and demeanor. His appearance betokened culture, a good situation, and a living salary. Inquiry revealed the fact that that he was a professor of pedagogy in one of the leading universities.

"Tolstoi," continued the professor, "has radical ideas regarding war, strife, and all forms of 'resistance to evil,' as he calls it. He interprets Christ's words literally where the latter says, 'and unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other.' The Count would carry this principle into all the relations of life. He thinks that all antagonism is fed and strengthened by counter antagonism. He would point to the consideration with which the Quakers are treated while practicing this policy of non-resistance. He thinks that no man is so vile as to abuse and despoil a fellow creature whose principles will not allow the use of violence in defending himself. It is his opinion, further, that all war and bloodshed would soon be things of the past, if nations would cease to build warships and organize armies, and instead would propose arbitration and a compromise, based on the rules of justice. As the world goes, such views are considered very radical and impracticable, and they may not be fully applicable to the case of Robert now under discussion, for children in school are to be considered under guidance and direction and not capable of deciding their own action in every case that comes up. And yet, if the teacher will avoid antagonism as such, and respect the rights and individuality of his pupils fully, he will

rarely ever fail to find all his difficulties removed.

Tolstoi, of course, does not mean to inculcate a supine, negative policy of action. He would make right and justice, and good will positive forces in society as the teacher should do in the management of his school. The human race has so long given rein to its bad passions that Tolstoi's policy is not generally understood and appreciated. Yet, if we honestly accept the teachings of the Christian religion we must expect society to reach this perfection before the millennium comes when righteousness shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea."

The professor's words made a profound impression, and, as nobody seemed inclined to add anything more, the assembly, for that evening, soon dissolved.



CHAPTER III.

The Story of Richard.

The next evening the hotel piazza was crowded. This series of impromptu gatherings bid fair to rival even the regular day exercises. By a sort of tacit agreement, a prominent professor acted as chairman, or rather spokesman, for the assembly. He cast a searching eye over the crowd and called upon Mr. Hartley, a well-known county superintendent of schools, to relate his experience with bad boys. The superintendent then entertained the assembly with the following narrative:

"Before coming into my present position, I was, for several years, a teacher in the district schools. I remember my first school as if it were yesterday. I was barely nineteen years old, and undertook the work with trepidation and some feelings of uncertainty as to the outcome. The neighborhood was rough, and the last teacher had been run off by the bad boys, encouraged by their equally bad parents.

"To begin with, I must make a confession which I fear will not cause me to be so popular with this assembly as was Mr. Broome, who told us the story of Robert. I did some whipping! Did I? Yes, I did! Whether or not it was best, I shall leave you to judge, when I have finished my story.

"The pupils of the school had been spoiled by previous teachers who allowed themselves to be overawed by both

pupils and parents. Discipline was very lax. Pupils obeyed or not as they pleased. They strolled into the school-room anywhere from fifteen to twenty minutes after the bell had called them in from recess. I determined at once that I would have order and obedience or I would know the reason why.

"One day during the first week, a vicious boy began some disorder back in the room. At that time I was hearing a recitation, and I asked the boy to come forward and take the front seat. I intended to keep him quiet in this way until I could get time to examine into his case.

"The boy paid no attention to my request and did not move. I went back, and, taking him by the arm, requested him to come out. Still he made no effort to comply.

" 'Richard,' said I, 'I shall whip you, if you do not obey me.'

"Then he reached over and held onto a desk across the narrow aisle. I saw that I must either back down before the school, and thus destroy the authority of my position, or be as good as my word and give Richard a good dressing.

"I went back to a closet and secured a good switch. As I came forward again, I said, 'Richard, this is painful, but I must be obeyed.'

"He remained immovable, and I began with some well-directed blows across his shoulders. As if shocked by surprise, the boy dropped flat upon the floor. In a moment he was upon his feet and walked promptly to the front seat.

"Richard never gave me any more trouble. My decisive action seemed to conquer him, and, in conquering

him, I conquered his family. In the case of former teachers the family had sided with their unruly children and helped to break up the school. The community stood by me, and so did Richard and his people when they recognized my open, determined spirit. My action worked like a charm upon the school. I had no more disorder or disobedience.

"I had a more extensive history of a bad boy to relate, but, while Richard's case is fresh in your minds, I will wait here a short time for questions and comment."

"I hope," said a gentleman on the outskirts of the crowd, "that I may not be considered either contradictory or vacillating when I say that I endorse the action of both Mr. Broome and Mr. Hartly. Our mode of managing a school must vary with our individualities. No two teachers can be successful in exactly the same way. There is a popular idea that any given case of discipline should be treated in a fixed way and in no other. This is a great fallacy. Of course certain fundamental principles must not be departed from, but many roads lead to the same objective point. Mr. Broome was right in that skillful maneuvering of Robert's case which forced the boy back upon his own manhood and self-respect. Mr. Hartley was also right in asserting the majesty of law and obedience when this principle had been habitually broken down and trampled under foot."

"Some teachers may say," added another speaker, "that Mr. Hartley should have trusted to moral suasion without a resort to force. That is all right in the proper place, but some natures are so debased that moral suasion will not reach them. Only the thunders of violated law will awaken them to a sense of their responsibili-

ty. In a critical case it would be too long to wait for the training up of the offender's conscience to a degree of susceptibility where moral suasion would do its work. Then why should it be expected that a school can be governed by moral suasion any more than a State. Its subjects are less mature and less qualified to obey than are the citizens of the State."

As this gentleman sat down, a young teacher took his place and continued. "I desire to say to this assembly that I am deriving much benefit from these informal discussions. Theory is good, but it must be supplemented by intelligent experience. In the case under consideration I have learned the necessity for dignified and self-possessed action on the part of any teacher. A hesitating, truckling spirit is out of place in the school room. The teacher must know the right and dare to maintain it. When he does this from an unselfish motive he always commands respect."

An elderly lady thought that no school could be successful without law and order. To enforce these there must be efficient administration, and in all administration of law there must be punishment. A law without penalty for its infringement would be an anomaly and a nullity. This is true in case of civil law, and it must be true with any law. It is invariably true in natural law. Nature always visits a penalty for a violation of her law. If you stick your finger in the fire, you must suffer. Nature is even pitiless enough to refuse you a new finger, if you burn the old one off. We learn to obey Nature's laws because we know her penalties are administered without fear or favor.

And yet this does not teach us to be cruel and unsym-

pathetic. Mother Nature is, after all, a tender nurse to her children, when they are obedient. No one is more so. But she has no sympathy for disobedience. It is only when her erring ones return in contrition to her arms that she receives them again into favor. Then only does she heal up their wounds. Still she always leaves a scar as a future warning.



CHAPTER IV.

The Story of Amos.

At the next meeting Mr. Hartley was by unanimous consent requested to continue his narrative in regard to his experience in dealing with bad boys. He readily assented and proceeded as follows:

“For my next school I went into an adjoining county. I taught at a place called Shady Grove. It was in a model community and I had no trouble. Without intending self-commendation, I may say that I gained a reputation for conducting a well-ordered school, and my services were in demand.

“The teacher in an adjoining district had trouble with bad boys and had to give up his school. At the close of my term, the directors engaged me to go over and finish out the other school, known as Bald Knob.

“It was the old story with my predecessor. He was a good-hearted man, but he had been indulgent and lacking in that force of character which commands respect and obedience. One of his students had especially set his authority at defiance. The boy’s name was Amos. He was about fourteen years old and did pretty much as he pleased. When the teacher could bear with him no longer he ran him out of the house, and Amos would jump over fence and bark back at him like a dog.

“When I took charge of the school, Amos walked in, the first morning, as large as life, evidently enjoying, by

anticipation, the good time he was going to have. He supposed all teachers were alike, for hitherto he had experienced no trouble in acting as he pleased.

"I soon made it convenient to have a little talk with Amos, and let him know that I had heard of him and other companions of his in the school. I told him further that I was disposed to help him and I wanted him to help me in return. He was careful about committing himself and said but little.

"I soon had need for a pencil and sent Amos with some money to buy it at the country store, a quarter of a mile away. He returned with the pencil promptly and seemed to enjoy the distinction of his office. I needed a nail driven into the wall and it somehow came in the way to call upon Amos to officiate again.

"Before many days had passed, Amos was my most obedient factotum and assistant. The new relation which he sustained to his teacher completely disqualified him for mischief. He seemed to have no time, or opportunity, for concocting his old-time tricks. His mind refused to do service in that direction any more. He even began to effect something in the way of books and study.

"Things ran along in this channel for some time, and I became quite hopeful. Later on I noticed Amos wearing an air of suspicion, as if he felt sometimes that he was being outwitted, and that things were not just as he would have them after all.

"Finally the 'old Adam' reasserted itself, and Amos fell from his high estate. How it was that he should have relapsed, I am not fully prepared to say. I suspect the novelty of his situation was not sufficiently lasting to continue the repression of his old nature. Perhaps

I also became careless, and somewhat relaxed my efforts before his new habits became sufficiently fixed to be permanent. At any rate, unpleasant as the confession may be, I am compelled to state the fact that Amos went into bankruptcy as to character, and ceased to be my assistant and trusted coadjutor. You see I cannot sacrifice truth for the sake of a beautiful story.

"One day Amos quarreled with his deskmate, and muttered his maledictions audibly to the great disorder and disgrace of the school. At once I said, 'Go, Amos, and get me a switch!' He went, but I saw him no more that day.

"The next morning Amos sent me a very long switch with an explanation that it took so much time to procure it that he could not get back. I went to his desk, and, getting his books, put them upon my table.

"The day following Amos returned and went to his desk. He looked for his books, and, not finding them, sat still in his seat. I called a class in spelling, and Amos came up and took his place in the class. When it would have been his turn to spell, I skipped him and put the word to the next pupil below. I completely ignored him even in numbering down the class at the close of the lesson.

"As I sent the other pupils out to recess, I called Amos to the front and detained him. When we were alone, I talked with him kindly and went over his case fully. I showed him that I had done all I could for him as I had promised at the beginning of the term, but that while he did well for awhile, he had, at last, utterly failed on his part. 'There is nothing more to do,' said I, 'but to take your books and go home. Here they are,

Amos. 'This probably closes your life at school, for you cannot come back. I do this for your good and for the good of the school.'

"Amos did not move, and I saw that he was deeply agitated.

" 'You may go,' I said.

"Then the tears began to fall and he broke down completely.

" 'Can't you whip me, Mr. Hartley?' he sobbed. 'I don't want to go home.'

" 'No,' said I, 'I do not want to whip you. I should rather not do that.'

" 'Yes, but you must,' said he. 'I want to stay in school. Please whip me!'

"I turned the case over rapidly in my mind and then decided to comply with his request. I would try to save him from ruin and give him one more chance for an education. I considered that the effect upon the school and even upon Amos himself would be better, if he made some atonement for his very bad conduct. So I whipped him.

"Amos was all right for the rest of the term, but, in respect for the truth, I am sorry I must say that I had to expel him the following year. If Amos ever became a minister of the gospel, or a man of much worth of any kind, I have failed to hear of it."

"Good!" exclaimed a number of teachers as Mr. Hartley closed his remarks.

"That was frankly told," said a lady. "I think I can now go back to my school and teach with more confidence, for I find another whose experience does not come out according to the books. I wonder if there are still others here who would acknowledge the necessity of extract-

ng comfort from daily contact with the imperfect?"

A forest of hands went up. Then the lady bowed and sat down with a radiant face.

An old teacher begged to ask Mr. Hartley a question. "Do you really believe," said he, "that a pupil's case is ever so hopeless that he should be sent adrift by expulsion?"

Mr. Hartley arose, and for a moment seemed to hesitate for a reply. At last he said, "May I answer by asking a question in return? Does the State ever give over a citizen as past redemption? Further, does Nature ever visit death upon those of her children who have violated her law? And does the Great Creator ever abandon a creature to his own wicked devices? To all these questions, I think most people will answer affirmatively. There are some who would deny, at least, in part.

"I confess that the gentleman's question is of the gravest import. It would be a fearful responsibility to sacrifice a boy who could be saved. And yet, we must not conclude that every boy who is expelled from school goes to destruction. Many of them are thus awakened to the necessity of reform, and, after all, make good citizens.

"Expulsion is often a necessity for the sake of the rest of the school. I have seen vicious boys who had as little right to be in the school as a hyena or the small-pox. It is not only a question of saving the vicious boy, but of saving others as well."

CHAPTER V.

How Bad Boys are Made.

It was thought best to devote one evening to a special consideration of the process by which bad boys are made. The chairman called upon Professor Campbell to put the ball in motion. He was a man of commanding appearance and pleasant address, and, on being introduced, spoke to this effect:

"While I believe in heredity, 'original sin,' and all that sort of thing, I also believe that the bad boy is made as well as that he is born. Constitutional tendencies no doubt exist in every human being that comes into the world. In some the good tendencies are more numerous, and, if favored by environment, they will dominate the life of the individual. In others evil tendencies are in the ascendant, and, unless counteracted, will drag down the individual's life. Scientists tell us that the evil tendencies inherited in human nature, and 'original sin' are much the same, and in this particular it is easy for theology and science to agree.

"We know further that boys who are naturally vicious are often made more so by parental discipline. Those parents who are most apt to transmit evil tendencies to their offspring are also the ones whose discipline has an evil effect upon their children. It is not necessary to present proof of this fact. Our own observation teaches us all that what I say is true.

“It would be too tedious to enumerate all the various features of government which have an evil effect upon the character of the young. The absence of affection and all the kindlier feelings in uncultured and depraved parents counts for much. To cuff, and beat, and drive children is to brutalize them. If most of the hard cases who make their appearance in our schools could lay open clearly to us their past experience we should, no doubt, be astonished to see a barren desert in the realm of the affections. That any human being could grow up with so little of human love and sympathy and not be bad would seem almost unaccountable.

“If the truth were fully known, the children of many well-to-do and even wealthy families receive little of that considerate attention and sympathy which effect so much in building up true nobility of character. Men of affairs are so engrossed with their business that they neglect their sons during the plastic period of life, and leave the bad influence of ill-chosen associates to get in its deadly work. Mothers, burdened with the cares of society and the new club life, leave the character of their tender daughters to be formed by evil-minded and ignorant nurses and inefficient and unsympathetic governesses. How can we wonder at the results?

“On the other hand, what have we seen? In one of the best and most cultured families I have ever known, the parents were the daily companions and confidants of their children. The little girls were provided by the mother with dolls, toy furniture, and all that kindergarten sort of materials that such children delight to possess. The older daughter had her camera and became expert in amateur photography to the great joy of herself and

her young friends who shared in the fruit of her art.

“The father saw that his sons had dogs, and all kinds of suitable tools for working in wood and developing mechanical talents and skill. As they grew old enough, they owned guns and hunting bags.

“Best of all, the parents were companions to their children and participated in all their joys and sorrows. They gave suggestions and encouraged them in play and work. They showed them how to do this and how to do that, in the line of some pleasure, or in acquiring some desirable or useful art, whether in domestic affairs or in pure culture. Study and even work, whether of hand or brain were made agreeable and desirable, if not positively pleasant. The mother taught the daughters taste in furniture and household decoration. The father was the sympathetic companion of his boys in fishing, and hunting, and boating, even to the extent of camping in the woods and exemplifying the life and character of that prince of foresters and hunters—Daniel Boone. Would you as a teacher think it possible that any other than good and noble boys and girls should enter your school from this family?

“And now what of the teacher’s share in producing our ever-present crop of bad boys? That many teachers are partners in crime with the bad boy’s parents cannot be denied. They also lack sympathy with child nature and have no appreciation of their duty towards those who have been committed to their charge.

“When I was a young teacher, I took a school in a county adjoining the one in which I was born. The teacher who had preceded me was very unwise in his management. He treated his pupils harshly and whipped a number of boys without just cause.

"This aroused antagonism and resentment, and finally the big boys decided that they would club their forces and thrash the teacher in turn. Such is the natural result of that kind of injustice. The boys were, of course, greatly in the wrong, but the teacher had by his conduct brought on the unpleasant state of affairs. The outcome did not result just as the boys had planned for the teacher learning of their intentions showed the white flag and decamped, being virtually driven away by his own students.

"Another of my predecessors had been found drunk in the school room and the session came to a sudden close. Thus you readily see that my task in that school could not, in the nature of the case, be very promising. I had to encounter nearly a score of strapping big boys who were from fifteen to twenty years of age. The community was rough and uncultured and the boys, judging from the past, naturally expected that in due time they would run the school.

"I entered upon my duties with some trepidation, but was determined not to back down. I made few rules, but gave all pupils to understand that they must do their duty and conform to the ordinary standard of right conduct. I have always found that a multiplicity of rules hampers the teacher and ties his hands at a time when he has greatest need for independent action.

"On the third day of the term, I saw unmistakable signs of rebellion. Three of the "big boys" before mentioned acted very badly and I almost knew that they were prepared to resent my correction. I kept perfectly cool and passed the matter over in the best way I could at the time.

“This occurred early in the afternoon and during the rest of the day I kept the three boys separate so that there could be no conference between them. I made no remarks before the school about the affair and said very little to the boys themselves. During recess I managed to have them doing some work and allowed only one of them to leave the room at a time.

“A little before closing time for that day, I sent a boy out to procure a switch. He returned with a formidable rod about ten feet long. This I placed in a conspicuous place upon the stage, but said nothing as to my purpose.

“I have always noticed that silence as to one’s purpose in a critical situation has a subduing effect upon both animals and human beings. A fierce dog will not bite you so long as you maintain perfect composure and stare him in the eye, especially if you hold out your hat to him. Your action is unaccountable and bewilders him. If you had turned to run he would have bitten you at once.

“In the rear of the school-room was a blackboard which extended across the entire end of the room. At the close of school I managed to have the three boys working at this blackboard while I stood on the platform near them. As the other pupils were being dismissed, I asked these boys to remain.

“After the other pupils were gone and an unusual quiet had fallen upon the room, I bade the boys to take separate seats near the stove, at the same time managing to prevent any communication among them. I then talked to them quietly, but seriously, about their conduct and tried to show them that I earnestly desired their welfare and had nothing else in view in all my dealings with

them. At this the youngest of the three broke down and began to shed tears, while one of the other two showed symptoms of a decidedly serious state of mind.

“By a skillful maneuvering of their case, I soon brought the boys to terms by peaceful diplomacy and they promised to behave in the future and help me in controlling the other boys. I then dismissed them. After they were gone I broke the switch into bits and tossed them out the window.

“The next morning the boys returned to school in a peaceful and obedient state of mind. The rest of the school were mystified as to what had really taken place. I preserved my policy of silence and said nothing about the affair. This had its effect. Some of the other boys also, having discovered the fragments of the switch, came to the conclusion that the offenders had been severely dealt with. This became the general feeling in the school, and I had no more trouble. After that the offenders themselves were always respectful and obedient. Some of my best friends to-day were pupils in that school. One of the boys became a member of the State Legislature, another the sheriff of that county, and still another is now attorney for Oklahoma City.



CHAPTER VI.

The Pupil's Side.

It was Saturday evening, and everybody felt more or less restful and kindly disposed in mind, possibly on account of the approaching Sabbath. So, for a change, the spokesman of the assembly proposed that they should take up the pupil's side of this great question of discipline.

"We often forget," said the speaker, "that there is any other point of view than that of the teacher. In fact, I doubt whether some teachers have ever dreamed that there is another way of looking at the subject. What do you all think? May we not, as teachers, often act in a narrow-minded and tyrannical way, simply because we do not think of the children as having feelings and rights and personality? Give us your views, Mr. Broome."

"I think you state the case correctly," said the latter. "This is a phase of our work which needs decidedly more attention. Teachers often fail to consider the capacity and endurance of pupils. They pile up work upon them till life becomes a veritable burden."

"I went aboard a street car in one of our cities. It was four o'clock, and school was out. When I took my seat I noticed a sweet little girl, with flaxen hair, who sat beside me. She had a large strap full of books on the seat between us. In her lap was a tablet, and she

held a big geography open before her. As the car jolted along the little creature tried to write off her task for the morrow. She got no inspiration from her surroundings. She saw nothing of happy faces in the merry crowds that passed. She beheld only her work. And such work as it was! Copying what were to her, then at least, the meaningless words of the text-book. Scrawling, scrubbing, drudging by the order of a thoughtless, exacting teacher.

“When the child got home it would be the same. No sunshine! No joy! No freedom! No time for games, and stories, and interesting books; but all thoughts bent upon the angry frown which must meet a failure to-morrow. A veritable slave, and yet so young, and so gentle, and so innocent!

“It makes my blood boil to think of the heartless tyranny of teachers who impose such tasks upon helpless children. It is a slaughter of the innocents in a modern but scarcely less cruel form. And for what? Echo answers, ‘For what?’ Is it that the child may have more knowledge? Scarcely, for her thoughts are only on completing the task! Is it that she may improve in penmanship and composition? Scarcely, for the work is done under circumstances where this would be impossible.”

As Mr. Broome took his seat, an elderly teacher arose and said: “So far as I have observed, it is mainly in city schools and colleges that the heartless burden imposes ply their trade. They are a part of the machine that can do nothing but grind and grind without ceasing. I would by no means charge all city schools and college

professors with this fault, for the guilty are, I am glad to believe, in a decided minority.

“The conscientious boys and girls are the ones who suffer. They feel that they must do these tasks in an honest way, and they break down at it. The rest learn to be unscrupulous and shirk and cheat. It is a common practice where there is a task-master in college for the students to pass down their written work from class to class, year after year. This is only a glimpse of the extensive moral degeneration that the system produces.”

“The cruel exactions of teachers?” The question came from a lady. “Yes; I am looking at them from the student’s point of view. I was once a student myself, and in a large school in one of the New England States. It was crowded with young men and young women, most of them honorable, noble, and true. We were studying to become teachers. Our instructors were thoughtful and considerate men and women. All? No; one man was a tyrant whom nobody loved. He set unreasonable tasks and never had a kind word for anybody. No work was ever good enough to earn his commendation. He made no distinction as to motives. All students were suspected, no matter what they did.

“It was examination time, at the end of the year. Students were filing into their seats to be ready for the ordeal. A fragile girl, with fevered cheeks, stepped to the instructor’s desk and said:

“ ‘Professor Britton, may I be excused? I am very ill. I will try to do my work at a future time, if I may have an opportunity.’

“The instructor did not consider. He had trained his mind to take everything of that nature as a subterfuge.

He did not look up from the sheet of paper where he was finishing a list of examination questions.

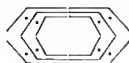
“ ‘No one can be excused,’ he replied and wrote on. If he had looked, his reply would have been different, at least we hope so.

“The girl was nearly ready to sink to the floor. She hesitated, then walked slowly to a rear seat. It was not possible for her to remain. Her heart was beating like a hammer, and her head was bursting with pain. She quietly slipped through the crowded door and was gone.

“Fifteen minutes later Amy—for that was the girl’s name—was found in a delirium of fever at her boarding-house. A doctor was called and he pronounced her condition dangerous. A sedative was administered and the patient slept for a short while. Then she awoke with a startled cry:

“ ‘He wouldn’t excuse me! Oh, I must go! Where is my examination paper? Let me go, or I shall be expelled.!’

“The nurse who watched by the bedside heard this sad refrain through the silent hours of the long, long night. At intervals, for three days, it never ceased. Then the poor perturbed soul took its flight, and Amy was at rest in a land where examinations and task-masters are known no more.”



CHAPTER VII.

Securing the Favor of Parents.

The Institute had been running a week, and the impromptu meetings, on the hotel piazza, had continued the same length of time. Much interest had been aroused in these meetings, and many teachers began to look forward to them every evening with more interest than to the regular lectures down in the academy building during the day. The discussions had become a regular topic of conversation in the various boarding-houses and on the streets. So when the second Monday evening came, the piazza was crowded and some teachers stood in the halls and doorways of the hotel.

In "calling the house to order," the leader touched upon the increase of interest and suggested that, since they had, in some measure, been out among the people on the previous Sunday, it might be well to take up the subject of the teacher's best way to secure the favor and co-operation of parents. He then ventured to call upon Professor Hardwick to make the opening talk. The Professor in his very charming manner consented.

"There is nothing more important to the teacher" said he, "than the approval and co-operation of parents. The children, of course, form their own opinions of the teacher, but the attitude of the parent goes a long way to modify that opinion. It is wrong for parents to speak disparagingly of the teacher in the presence of their chil-

dren, but many do it. Then there are various other ways in which the parent makes himself felt.

“The difference between teachers as to the respect and love which they inspire among patrons as well as among pupils is truly remarkable. There are teachers who naturally make friends and there are others who just as naturally make enemies.

“I once knew a teacher who was forever offending somebody. If he made a talk in public, somebody would be hurt, or would disapprove of what was said. I sometimes thought the man delighted in rubbing the hair the wrong way, or enjoyed prodding people, just as certain boys seem happiest when sticking sharp sticks into toads to see them jump.

“This teacher assumed the same attitude towards his pupils. He would make sarcastic flings at them. If a student failed often in recitation, this teacher seemed to enjoy putting him upon the rack before the class simply for the fun of seeing him wriggle.

“Again he would apparently make a great effort at reform and for some time things would run smoothly. You would think he was learning to make people love him after all. Vain illusion! The old nature soon reasserted itself and all prematurely constructed anticipations of popular favor tumbled in ruins. I really believe some teachers are born so, and can not possibly learn to do otherwise.”

There was a lady in the audience who had taught many years in the country schools. She was reserved and had not taken part in the discussions. Knowing her good sense and wide experience, a number of the teachers insisted upon hearing from her. With a willingness

to oblige, Mrs. Arkwright came forward and said:

"It is true that I have taught mainly in the country schools, and I think I understand the country people, though I do not suppose they are widely different from other people. Human nature is simply human nature wherever you find it. However, I will say for country patrons that they either stand by the teacher or they do not, and they make up their minds pretty soon. If they decide to be your friend, you will know it. There is no half-way neutrality about them. They speak out their minds.

"Friendship for the teacher in the country schools means something positive. The farmers' wives all open their homes to you, and, even if you don't "board 'round," you know there is a welcome place always waiting for you. Many little courtesies, attentions, and favors, that city teachers never meet with, are bestowed upon the teacher in the country school.

"The young teacher who goes to take charge of a country school must not forget that first impressions are lasting. Every child makes up its mind during the first day and its opinion is reported at the supper table at home.

" 'Mamma,' the girls say, 'Miss Scott is a lovely teacher. She makes us toe the mark, but she knows what's right, and she is good. We're all going to love her and no mistake. Why, don't you think that she had poor little Bud Piper up saying over his lessons to her in no time. The teacher last year couldn't get him to say a word for a week. It wasn't a minute before Miss Scott had him so interested that he forgot where he was and began telling her about his dog right out loud before all the school. The lesson was about a dog, you know. And those bad boys!

Miss Scott was so sweet and kind, that they just couldn't get up heart to be mean. Shag Brock was as gentle as a lamb.'

" 'Yes mamma,' spoke up one of the boys, 'as we came home, Shag said we had a genuine lady for a teacher at last and he was going to stand up for her. Nobody could speak ill of Miss Scott when he was around.'

"And so it went around the table, each speaking in turn. Before bed-time that evening the teacher's reputation was fully made up and placed on record in the mind of every member of the household. Yes, the first day of school always tells the tale of the teacher's success or failure.

"May I give the obverse side of Miss Scott? I know a teacher who was very different. He came from a distant county and success was very necessary in his case. The young man was well educated. I'll not mention his name. He had studied his profession. He had attended the institute and was well posted. He was intelligent and had every qualification but one. He lacked good judgment—hard, horse sense, the farmers call it.

"This young teacher was progressive, and he thought that nothing short of the ideal could be tolerated for a moment. He failed to remember that "Rome was not built in a day," and that a school can not be revolutionized in the twinkling of an eye. You have seen that unpractical sort of people. They are to be found in all the various walks of life.

"When this young man came to teach in the place of which I speak, the word method of teaching children to read was new in that section. The young man had picked up the method somewhere, and, theoretically, he was

all right. It was in practice that he failed. On the first day of school, the small children brought their spelling-books.

“ ‘Take these things home,’ said the new teacher. ‘It wouldn’t matter if you burned them up, for the day of the spelling book is past. We’ll take up reading at once and learn to spell by writing the words as we go along. All we need is reading matter. I have a chart. Here it is!’ And he pointed to where the chart hung upon the wall. ‘You little children will read from this. You will not need any books till you are ready for the first reader.’

“This is only a small sample of the many reforms that this teacher introduced the first day. The pupils were astonished and perplexed. What they had been accustomed to was very different. They eyed the teacher with suspicion. And yet it was not so much the newness of the teacher’s methods that produced confusion and antipathy as his way of introducing them. When the children reported at home that evening, it was generally voted, among the patrons, that there was a screw loose somewhere in that teacher’s mental machinery.

“Some of the parents did not send their children back to school the next day. Before the end of the week a third of the pupils had dropped out, and in a month there were but few left. I think the school closed in three months with five pupils in attendance. It had started out with eighty.

“Now, my young friends, you must remember that here was a teacher who was theoretically right in every particular. What he lacked was tact, or, as I have called it, common sense. If he had introduced his new methods gradually, preparing the way for every step, he might

have gained every point and carried pupils and parents all with him. With all his attainments and high ideals, he was woefully lacking in good judgment, and that lack proved his undoing. A teacher possessed of this good quality would have carried every point and become the most popular man in all that country.



CHAPTER VIII.

Some Extreme Cases.

In reporting these discussions, I shall not hereafter attempt to give an account of all the meetings that took place or to state the order of their occurrence. A selection of the best things said is deemed sufficient.

One evening a discussion of extreme cases came up. Many examples of youthful depravity were narrated. I am inclined to the view that many of them should be classed only as exaggerated cases of pure mischief. A majority of the teachers were of the same opinion.

One teacher said: "I had charge of the high school department of the public schools in one of our large cities. We had little trouble and I congratulated myself that I was getting along finely. By the way, this is the very time when the teacher needs to look out for squalls.

"One day I was hearing a large class in rhetoric when an old gray rat bounded across the room. Several of the boys at once gave chase, and the girls screamed, of course. For a minute all was uproar and supreme confusion. Finally the rat was killed and order was restored.

"During the uproar, I noticed that one of my boys looked embarrassed and acted in a suspicious manner. I made some investigation and soon satisfied myself that he was responsible for the aged rodent's sudden appearance in the school room. At first, the boy, whose name was Henry, was disposed to be sullen, but finally

he owned up, when he saw there was nothing else to do.

"I could find no evidence of maliciousness in the act, but I felt that such a flagrant breach of discipline could not be passed over lightly. The good order and dignity of the school demanded serious punishment. The act could not have been other than premeditated, for the rat, having been procured, was carefully concealed in a box and slyly carried into the school room to be liberated at the opportune moment.

"Evidently the extreme fondness for playing tricks had crowded out, for the time, all other considerations from the boy's mind. Yet, as I have already intimated, I felt that such conduct must be given a decided rebuke. So I suspended Henry from attendance upon the school for the space of ten days. He acknowledged the justice of his punishment, and, at the expiration of the time, returned and took his place in school. I never had any more trouble with Henry, for really he was not a vicious boy."

The story of Henry was followed by another of less fragrant character. Professor Elkins arose and said: "Brethren, I know a case that can beat that. It did not occur in my own school, but comes in a most authenticated way, from a friend of mine who, in early life, went to the frontier to teach, in one of our Southern States.

"The country was still in a crude condition, but many well-to-do people had moved into the community, and they desired a first-class school for their children. My friend was just graduated from college and he desired to make teaching his profession. So he accepted the offer and was soon duly installed.

"There were in the school several boys approaching ma-

turity—an age at which we may usually expect the most reckless conduct. And yet the boys were by no means abandoned characters. Just how the breach of decorum, to be related, ever originated, my friend could never tell. The whole affair may have been unpremeditated.

“The school was in the country, and the school-house stood in the edge of a wood. One bright fall morning, the day’s work was well advanced, when one of the large boys came in late. He hung up his hat on a peg and took his accustomed seat.

“A recitation was in progress and the teacher had not observed the boy’s entrance. Yet he was soon aware of a commotion in the school room. He first noticed all the children grasp their noses between their thumbs and first fingers. Then he felt a stifling, choking sensation from some most atrocious odor.

“It soon developed that the boy who had just arrived was sitting alone. His deskmate had tumbled from the opposite end of his seat and scrambled away in double-quick time. Those sitting near also made a precipitate retreat to remote parts of the room. A number of the worst boys began to snort like wild horses, and the greatest disorder prevailed.

“‘He’s got a pole-cat, Mr. Blank,’ shouted a red-headed boy, on the back seat, to the bewildered teacher.

“The teacher’s eyes flashed like fire as he made a spring for the offender. In a moment he had him by the nape of the neck, and by a supreme effort sent him whirling out the door. There was no time for investigation or board meetings. The case was so flagrant that delay, even for a moment, was out of the question, so my friend informed me,

"Nothing more was seen of the ejected member of the school for that time. But little more work was done during the day. The house had to be fumigated with burning tar. The desk in which the offender sat was rubbed over with walnut leaves and pennyroyal, and backwoods disinfectants of various kinds were distributed about the room and over the furniture and walls.

"In telling me about it, my friend said: 'That was the most outrageous case I ever met with. I think I was never more angry in my life. Just how much of malicious intent there was in the matter I never stopped to inquire, and do not know to this day.' "

Another teacher spoke up: "Of course you have all heard of the tricks of college students. They used to be more common than they are now. They belong more or less to the barbarism of the past. Modern thought and culture, even among students, are against them. Yet the late trouble at West Point Military Academy shows how hard it is for that peculiar form of ruffianism, known as hazing, to die out."

"All forms of college outlawry, it seems to me," said Mr. Hartley, "had their origin in the dormitory system, where large numbers of youths are herded together, so to speak. The restraints of family influence and social environment are absent, and the spirit of mischief ranges at will. I should never place a boy of mine in such environment. It is responsible for the wrecked characters of thousands of young men.

"Of course many of the college tricks are harmless. I once knew a case of bell-ringing which I may be pardoned for relating.

"Two students, on mischief bent, thought they would

have a lot of good fun. So one of them pulled off his shoes one night as the clock was nearly at ten. He then slipped silently up the dark belfry stairs in the wake of the bell-ringer. He hid in a dark corner while the ringer passed down and locked the belfry door. In half an hour the latter would return to ring the last retiring bell. In the meantime our hero in mischief climbed to the bell and tied a strong cord to the bell-clapper. Then he threw the ball of cord out of the belfry window to the ground below.

"In due time the bell-ringer returned, and while he was tolling 'lights out,' the other boy slipped out the door and down the stairs to the ground below. His roommate was in their own room in the third story of a dormitory building opposite. This boy let down a string from the window to his coadjutor in mischief. The latter at once tied his cord to the string and it was elevated to the window above.

"By this time, of course, lights were out. So nobody saw what was going on. Both students retired to bed, but not to sleep. One of them tied the cord aforesaid securely to his big toe as he lay in bed. The cord passed out through a small opening in the window, left apparently for the sake of ventilation. As the foot of the bed stood across one-half of the window the cord could not be seen.

"At midnight the college bell began to toll with measured intervals. A half hour later, it was still tolling. At one, two, and three o'clock it was still the same. As one of the boys got tired he transferred the cord to the other boy's big toe.

"Nobody in the vicinity could sleep. The bellringer roused himself, rubbed his eyes, and sallied forth but

could find no explanation. The bell was certainly bewitched! Two or three of the most zealous professors joined the bellringer in running down every possible clue. They even visited the rooms of all the students, whom, without exception, they found sleeping(?) soundly.

"The next day the bellringer was called before the faculty. It was said that he held the key to the belfry and must know, if anybody had entered. He asserted with much earnestness, and apparent sincerity, that he had locked the door each time that night, and always hitherto, and that it was impossible for anyone to have come in by that route.

"After the usual quota of inquiries and surmises the case was dismissed and to this day the tolling of that college bell is a deep mystery, except to the two young men and their confidential friends. In later years one of the mischief-makers has been in Congress and the other has become a prominent newspaper man in California."



CHAPTER IX.

Some Extreme Cases. (Continued.)

Before the discussion mentioned in the last chapter was finished, a great variety of stories and opinions was offered. The entire subject of old-time pranks in school and college was gone over—how the boys carried off gates, exchanged business signs in a ridiculous way, and played tricks on the president and professors. The old story that must always come in was not forgotten—how the professor came into his lecture-room one morning, and, finding a goose secured in his platform chair, politely bowed to the body of assembled students, and remarked with great courtesy, ‘Since I see you have a suitable instructor already installed, I beg pardon for intrusion and will retire.’

The principal of a country academy told how his ‘shack’ boys were always getting up some mischief of a broadly farcial character. As for example, an old wether and an antique gander were accustomed to browse in the vicinity. The sheep belonged to the family of a young belle of the place and the gander to the family of a smart young man who was her admirer. One evening, when the boys knew the young gentleman was making a call, they caught the sheep and tied the gander securely on his back. When the pair were let loose, it is easy to imagine what happened. Observers on the road to the lady’s residence saw a ghost-like object moving with great

velocity through the darkness, waving its white arms and uttering piercing cries. The sheep had been a pet in early life and never checked its wild flight till it fell exhausted in the parlor where the lovers were sitting.

"I don't think a little fun hurts any boy," said a recent graduate from college who had donned the professor's garb. "What I hear condemned in this assembly is nothing but college spirit. Instead of repressing it, give us more of it. We don't want to make milk-sops of young men. They have got to meet hard-scrabbling, bumping realities in life. Put some stiffening into them and let them be prepared for business. That's my view."

"You doubtless believe in hazing then?" said an older teacher back in the crowd.

"I do, most assuredly," replied the other. "It does a boy good to have the conceit knocked out of him before he gets too far from home."

"But, suppose he has no conceit in him?" rejoined number two. A boy that has been properly brought up knows his place in any sphere of life."

"That may be so in exceptional cases, but some boys have not had the home training of which you speak. In any event, I believe it does a boy good to be jolted up early in life. It shakes a lot of sentiment out of him and hardens him for what he must meet in his subsequent career."

At this the elderly man was again upon his feet. "Your doctrine may be all right for a prize-fighter's apprentice. I catch your drift. You assume that success in life is attained only through battling and knocking. I know that many other people entertain similar views. Your position has been popularized by the modern scien-

tific doctrine of the survival of the fittest in which each individual is supposed to be at constant war with his fellows. That, I admit, has been the case with all the lower animals and even with man in his primitive and less civilized condition, but when he enters the realm of enlightened intelligence the case is different."

"I don't see how you are going to make it different," was the young professor's answer. The only difference that I can see is in the form, or expression, of the struggle. The highest intellectual effort still has its contest for the mastery. This struggle may not manifest itself in physical force, but still it is there. To succeed, an idea must prevail over the minds of men, and it takes push, discussion, exposition, and a warfare of contending ideas to gain acceptance. Am I not right?"

"You are, in a sense. I am not contending for an altruistic negation of self. That would be an equally false position. What I want is to see life elevated into the higher forms of emulation. As civilization advances, we should put the lower and baser forms of contention from us. It is more brutal, and less desirable among civilized men, to punch a fellow's nose and despoil him of his goods than by good judgment and legitimate foresight to outwit him in a trade. The hardening process that you first spoke of appeals more to the animal side of our nature and tends to develop the baser passions and to drag down and destroy. We want to rise to the intellectual and the spiritual plane as fast as possible, as indicated in your second position. Leave off your first and I may agree with you."

At this juncture a lady arose. "This discussion is very interesting to me," said she. "I see much truth

in both sides of the argument. Contention brings out the truth. That strife is necessary, we see exemplified in this discussion itself. And I can't see that the truth could be made clearer, if our dogmatic friends came to blows. The golden mean of strife and contention in its higher forms is what we want.

"The advocates of football contend for its value as a developer of the manly virtues in strenuous contest. They say, 'It is rough we grant, but so is the battle of life.' Now, as I see it, they put the case too strongly. Very few young men find life a physical contest. A club, or team, in which they were subjected to the severest intellectual struggles would seem to me more appropriate and beneficial. I grant you that a potato plant grown in a dark cellar will always be sappy, weak, and worthless. It needs to be placed out where it can battle with the elements and gather strength and color by a natural and legitimate appropriation of environing materials. Yes; I believe in educational training which involves a struggle for the mastery, but I believe in so adjusting it that the good qualities in the individual will be developed, rather than the bad."

"Where does the 'bad boy' come, in this discussion?" asked the chairman.

"Everywhere," replied Mr. Broome. "All our forms of discipline tend either to develop him or to repress him. In our training through some form of struggle for the mastery, we may wisely develop the nobler qualities of soul, or unwisely develop the ignoble qualities. It all depends upon our management of the case. Some boys are born with superabundant motive power. They must be put at something where they can expend this power, and

nothing suits them better than a struggle for the mastery. If they can not get this struggle in a legitimate and helpful way, they will get it in an illegitimate and hurtful way. These masterful boys must have enough of suitable work to do else they are like wild trains that run away and destroy themselves. When the steam is up in a boiler it must be allowed some vent or it will wreck its engine. Its best and most profitable vent is work. Safety-valve escape is a poor makeshift, though it is much better than none. Artificial struggles gotten up for the training of youth are like safety-valves. They are an inferior substitute. Genuine work is the true idea."

"I take issue there," rejoined the young professor. "Your illustration is not fairly put. Play, or recreation, is an indispensable element in the life of the young. Froebel took advantage of the child's disposition to play in order to make training agreeable. This is the foundation of kindergarten work. In any event, 'All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy,' as the old adage goes.

At this point the chairman observed that the talks bade fair to become too discursive, and he thought it time to bring the meeting to a close.



CHAPTER X.

Teachers and Parents Didn't Co-operate.

One evening the principal of a village school gave his experience with a troublesome boy. As the boy in this case was upheld by his parents, it may be helpful to give some of the particulars.

The village contained a factory, and I have noticed that manufacturing and mining towns are hard fields for the teacher who is not well up on bad boys. However, the principal in question was a good man who had risen from the ranks and was well experienced in various kinds of school work. As he said himself, he never lost sleep on account of bad boys. In this he was wise. His constant advancement to better positions showed that his work was a success.

On the evening in question, this principal, Mr. Murdock by name, spoke as follows: "When I went to take charge of the Poultney school, I was advised to look out for snags, a thing I never failed to do anywhere, for I found out early in life that success does not come from reclining "on flowery beds of ease."

"Before entering upon my work, I learned that the school board had previously been very unfortunate in the selection of principals. The men chosen were generally inefficient and had demoralized the school badly. The last incumbent was a regular crank and an opium-eater who had to be dismissed before his term was half out.

"For a week or so after we opened, it was smooth sailing, as is usual, but soon trouble developed in the third-grade room. By the way, I want to ask all principals present, if the third grade has not always given them most trouble? I see by show of hands that you agree with me."

"How do you account for that, Mr. Murdock?" interrupted a principal in the assembly.

"It is this way, in my opinion," replied he. The third grade contains most boys who are in the transition stage from childhood to youth. This is especially true where the less cultivated element in a community prevails and the children are backward in their education. These boys as children naturally yielded more readily to direction and obedience. It is characteristic of children for the will to be swayed by older minds. As youth advances, the mind begins to assume the independent attitude of full development. And yet the boy has not learned the lesson of self-respect which in future years is to become a check upon his conduct. He is exactly at the age where he has lost this virtue of childhood and has not acquired that which belongs to manhood. Hence the greater amount of trouble that we have with boys in the third grade.

"To resume my narrative, I said that trouble had begun in the third grade in my school at Poultney. There was in the room a rough, overgrown boy who took it into his head to be disobedient and insolent to the teacher. The teacher sent for me, and I went to her room. I settled the trouble easily enough for the time, but concluded that it would be better to see the parents and have their co-operation in case of a further outbreak.

“That evening after school, I saw both the father and the mother. I should advise teachers always to confer with parents in troublesome cases. Be perfectly frank and kindly disposed toward them and you will generally secure their co-operation. It is true that I did not succeed in this case, but the reason will be explained further on. As I stated, I saw both parents and apparently they were ready to co-operate with me and the teacher in governing their boy. They both advised me to whip him, if he did not behave. I had a vague impression that they spoke grudgingly or with some lack of enthusiasm, but it passed from my mind.

“A few days later, this same third-grade teacher sent for me a second time. As I approached the room, she was standing in the hall and apparently was very much excited.

“‘Mr. Murdock, that boy has drawn a knife on me,’ she exclaimed and then turning away, burst into tears.

“I went into the room where I found the boy still in a very rebellious attitude. However, I succeeded in giving him a good sound chastisement which seemed to settle him for a moment. Then he muttered some threat of what he would do, and I, at once, ordered him to pack up his books and go home.

“The boy’s father understood it to be a case of suspension, and it was. So he took the matter before the school board. I had heard in the meantime that both he and the mother were upholding the boy in his outrageous conduct. I was summoned to appear before the board at a certain hour. I went and found the father, the mother, and the boy all present.

“Details of the charges preferred by the father were

read to me by the secretary of the board. The boy had reported that his offense was very trivial and that the teacher had abused him very unreasonably, while I had even beaten him with my fist. Much more of the same kind was also included.

"I was then called upon for a statement in reply, which I made in full, being very careful to be exact and to give the boy full justice. The father was not satisfied and desired that I be called upon for proof of my assertions.

" 'Yes; Mr. Murdock,' said the chairman of the board, 'We want this matter settled in an uncontroverted manner, so that there will be no question about it hereafter. So, since the gentleman demands proof, I think it best that we give it to him. We will allow you time to call witnesses.'

"I turned to the boy who sat shame-faced near his father. 'Ben,' said I, 'don't you know that you have been lying about this matter and that what I have stated is the truth?'

"I looked him straight in the eye and he wilted. 'Yes,' he answered, 'what you told is the truth!' and he began to cry like a baby.

"I turned to the board: 'Mr. Chairman, you hear my witness?'

" 'Yes; that will do, Mr. Murdock. We are perfectly satisfied.'

" 'So am I,' said the father as he began to lead his son with some vigor from the room.

"The mother followed. We soon heard the sounds of conflict in the rear of the building and I knew that justice was being meted out.

“I wrote the father the next day, that after his correction of the boy I had nothing further against him, and that, if the boy would promise to obey, and his parents would support the discipline of the school, he could return. This was all made satisfactory and the boy came back to school.

“After a month he became insolent to the teacher again. I learned that the mother had not kept her promise, and I went to see her. She was evasive and “allowed” that “Benny” wasn’t treated right. I gave the boy another whipping. The following day he was still more insolent and I sent him home to stay.

“As indicated in the course of my narrative, I was finding out, from time to time, where the trouble in Ben’s case lay. When the whole truth came out afterwards, I learned that my third-grade teacher had, in accepting her present position, supplanted a former teacher who was a special friend of Ben’s family. This circumstance had rendered it impossible, so it seems, for Ben’s father and mother to do his present teacher justice. So they had upheld their boy in his outrageous conduct, and that to his own ruin.

“I discovered that a teacher in another grade was also interested and had a finger in the pie. This showed me the necessity of having every teacher in the school loyal to the principal and to every other teacher associated with her. Good discipline requires the hearty co-operation of parents with teachers and of teachers with each other. You may write that down as settled.

CHAPTER XI.

Some Little Annoyances.

It was thought desirable to give an evening to discussing those little annoyances which give the young teacher so much trouble. To successfully manage the "water-bucket," the "going-out" nuisance, "crowding around the stove" in winter and other such perplexities often gives the district teacher more trouble than does the "bad boy." The truth of this was generally recognized by the assembly, and Mr. Saunders, who was well experienced in the common schools, was called upon to open the discussion. In substance he said:

"I can give you my observation, or experience. You will have to take it and make the best you can out of it. I will not always guaranty that it will fit your case. I hope, however, that it may be helpful.

"First, I will say that the teacher must not consider any detail too insignificant for careful attention. Very dignified teachers—educators, they would, doubtless, prefer to call themselves—might say that the subject now under consideration is unimportant, but don't you believe it, teachers. Everything is important. The cents make the dollars. A little leak destroys the dam. So, little points of discipline make, or unmake, the school.

"The water-bucket? Yes; the water-bucket! I have known it to become a veritable bugbear to the inefficient country teacher and sometimes city teachers do not fare

much better. 'May I get a drink?' 'May Abe Gentry and I go to the spring?' All day long these questions assault the ears of the weary teacher who fails to manage details.

"What would I do about it? Why, abolish the water-bucket, of course. You don't need to have the children going to the water-bucket in a constant stream and making a slop of one whole end of the school-room. An excessive 'drink habit' may be acquired, even by children, with no other beverage than common water, and very common at that. Warm pond water would be a temptation during study hours. And yet, let recess be announced and every one of them will rush out of the house to play and romp fifteen minutes or half an hour without ever thinking of water. Did you ever know two boys, or two girls, to ask permission to carry water from the spring during play hours? I never did. Hence most of their zeal for water is assumed and uncalled for.

"Now for a plan! Arrange to have plenty of water within easy reach during play hours. I used to keep it just back of the house—for boys on one side of the door, and for girls on the other. Have plenty of buckets and dippers so all may be easily served. If you have a janitor, it should be his business to keep fresh water ready. Otherwise you may need to send some of your boys to attend to this matter before the time when the water will be needed.

"Instruct all pupils to get water during the play hour and to do it at once. Then there need be no delay when the bell rings to come in to studies. Necessity will soon teach them to attend to this. A few may forget at first, but their thirst will put them in mind, the next time.

“If any pupils ask for water after they come in, you may say, ‘Yes; you have my permission to go out and get water, but the time must be made up at study during play hours.’ Thus none will be required to suffer, and yet, you keep a check upon an abuse of the privilege.

“In my own experience, I found the above plan a success. It removed all friction and annoyance. I did not make it a disgrace for pupils to be kept in, to make up extra time, which they had lost in going out for water. Yet, few would claim the privilege, if required to take the time from play.

“The plan, of course, presupposes that the school day is divided into four periods for study. And these periods are not to extend over an hour-and-a-half each. . . . “There must also be sufficient intermediary time for getting water.

“If any of you should feel that your pupils suffer for water during the warm season, you can amend the proposed plan by taking five minutes in each of the study periods to pass the water-bucket around to such pupils as may want to drink. This ought certainly to meet every reasonable demand.”

Another district teacher, Mrs. Ray, said, “I have used a similar plan to correct the ‘going out’ nuisance. All pupils are free to go, but they must make up the time lost. So none are prevented from going, and yet the privilege is not abused. It may be well, however, to exercise care in applying this rule to very small children. They always need special attention on the part of the teacher.

“I remember that the old teachers of my early school days had some amusing devices to regulate the ‘going out’

evil. One kind old pedagogue provided a little paddle on one side of which he printed 'OUT,' and on the other side he printed 'IN.' The paddle was hung upon a nail by the door, and, when a pupil left the room, he turned to the front the side which read 'OUT.' When he came back he turned out the side which read 'IN.' Then another pupil was at liberty to go.

"This arrangement prevented more than one pupil's going out at a time, but did not always give the right pupil a chance, since the one who got to the sign-board first could go. Another teacher used a little hooked stick which he hung upon a bracket. The pupil who left the room was required to carry this stick with him and replace it on the bracket when he returned. The weak point with this device was that the stick was always getting lost. * * *

"The 'going out' evil will grow rapidly when not properly regulated by the teacher. I once passed a school-house where a dozen or more children were wandering about the grounds. At first, I thought it must be play-time, but, on inquiring of a little girl, I found they had simply 'gone out.' The teacher had no restriction. Such looseness of discipline soon brings a reproach upon the school. The patrons observe the condition of affairs in passing the school-house as I did and the teacher's credit in the neighborhood, for discipline, is soon gone.

"Some children seem to have a mania for leaving the room. If you will let them, they will go out from three to five times in each quarter of a day. Others are timid and do not go out at all, sometimes even when they should go. If you require all to ask permission, this alone may stop excessive indulgence. Unless the pupils

discover that you are very weak in discipline, few will ask to go out a second time. As a help to your memory, you may also have each pupil write his name on the black-board near the door, as he leaves the room. This will serve as a check, since he will hesitate to put his name down twice, and, if he does, he will be detected."

As Mrs. Ray closed, another teacher in the assembly spoke about the "stove-huddling" nuisance as follows:

"In large cities where the school buildings have steam heat, of course the rooms are warm in every part. In most country school-houses, such is not the case. The children farthest from the stove are apt to suffer, in the coldest weather.

"In the old log houses of the backwoods when I was a boy the conditions were still more primitive, though I suppose few, or none, such yet remain. Sometimes a fire was built up on the dirt floor in the middle of the room. The smoke then escaped through an opening in the roof, or in any way it could. The pupils, few in number, sat around the fire in the form of a square. The seats were halves of the split trunks of trees.

"The next step in advance was to build a stick-and-clay chimney in one end of the room. It contained a large open fire-place into which a whole wagon load of wood could be piled at one time. In front of this the pupils sat, and, in very cold weather, they sometimes stood upon the hearth in front of the great roaring fire till they got warm. When a boy's trousers had become quite hot, a mischievous companion caught the trousers leg suddenly on the opposite side and drew the scorching cloth tight upon the skin. The effect may be imagined. There was, besides, much crowding and pushing, all of which was

productive of great disorder, and quite provoking to the teacher.

“In modern school-houses in the country, the conditions are very much improved. Some districts have elegant buildings. Yet, you may imagine places where the poor teacher has troubles enough on a very cold day. What I have already said is sufficient to show that the stove problem is not so easy of solution as the inexperienced teacher might suppose. Children will be continually wanting to go to the stove to warm. Others will be too hot and will ask to sit further away. As in the water-bucket case, pupils will soon learn to abuse their privileges. Nor do I think the difficulty so easily overcome, especially in very cold weather. About all the teacher can do is to keep up a hot fire and warm every part of the room as well as possible. If the building is not close and snug, ask the directors to make it so. Then with a good stove and plenty of fuel, you should be able to heat the room enough to make sitting within any reasonable distance comfortable.”



CHAPTER XII.

Some Little Annoyances, (Continued).

The discussion recorded in the last chapter continued at some length. A county superintendent of long experience gave much valuable information which he had picked up in visiting the schools under his charge. The substance of what he said was as follows:

“As it seems to me, the foundation of all these petty annoyances is a lack of proper discipline on the part of the teacher. A teacher who is weak in discipline may expect them always. The pupils soon discover the teacher's weak points and make their attacks accordingly. If the teacher allows frequent interruptions, she may expect them. If she gives up to repeated requests and finally grants what she at first refused, the pupils have already stormed the fort and will soon have things about as they please.

“I tell you, teachers, you cannot govern a school, if you are not master of the situation. You must not only show no weak spot, but you must possess an abundance of reserve power. The pupils feel, at once, the influence of a positive character and a strong will. Petty annoyances do not come to teachers who possess these characteristics.

“This thing of allowing pupils to ask questions constantly is absurd, to say the least of it. If allowed to continue soon degenerates into nonsense and worse than non-

sense. I knew a teacher once who allowed the question nuisance such latitude that his pupils finally made him ridiculous. In the midst of a recitation, a pert boy would put some question entirely foreign to the matter in hand. Another boy would follow it up and the whole time of the recitation would be wasted. The teacher seemed to be a scholar, but he was so simple-minded that he evidently did not see that the boys were having a good time at his expense. Any teacher worthy of the name ought to know what is proper and profitable in the matter of asking questions. I have seen a school utterly ruined by too frequent indulgence in this habit.

“I have also been in schools where the children used this device to make the teacher think they were studying very hard. Once, I remember, the teacher would say, ‘Get your lessons, children,’ and a regular stream of small boys and girls began marching up to his desk with questions. They were studying the spelling lesson, or the reading lesson, and the trick was to point at a certain word on the page, and turn the book around in the teacher’s face. He thus pronounced the words for each in turn. After two or three journeys back and forth, the children began to settle down and quiet was restored. Again the teacher said, ‘Study your lessons,’ and the process was repeated.

“In this connection, I will relate an ancient anecdote which speakers palm off as original. I was not a witness to the affair, but a gentleman, who claims that he was, relates it in this fashion:

“ ‘The teacher was hearing a small boy recite. It was long ago, and methods in that school were primitive. The pupil had been spelling ‘on the book,’ and ‘off the

book,' as it was termed. It was in the 'Old Blueback,' so-called, and the lesson was at the page which begins with 'baker.' The little fellow was now trying to read the lines printed under the columns of spelling and founded upon them. The sentence was, 'I love the young lady that shows me how to read.'

" 'The small reader's efforts were very labored, and, while he drawled out one word after another, a stream of pupils were coming up with their fingers pointing to words in their lessons, that they desired the teacher should pronounce. In his excruciating efforts, the boy had reached the word 'lady' and could not make it out.

" 'Spell it!' roared the teacher, and, just as the boy called the letters 'l-a,' a little girl stuck her book in the teacher's face with her finger at a word.

" 'Block!' cried the teacher, in answer to the little girl.

" 'Block,' piped the small boy who was reciting and naturally supposed that the teacher was prompting him.

"The teacher turned to the recitation without hearing the mistake. 'Go on!' said he.

" 'd-y,' drawled the boy.

"Again a book covered the teacher's face, calling for the pronunciation of a word. 'Head!' he called aloud to the inquiring pupil.

" 'Head,' squeaked the small boy.

"Again, not having heard, the teacher turned to the recitation. 'Think now of the meaning and appropriateness of what you are reading and tell me what that spells,' said he.

" 'Blockhead,' squeaked the urchin,

" 'Right you are!' cried the teacher, with an evasive manner and a flushed face. 'I never heard anything more

appropriate. I knew you were a blockhead, but never expected you would acknowledge it. Go and get that lesson over.'

" 'Unconsciously,' said the gentleman who related the story, 'that boy stumbled onto a big truth which the teacher was loth to acknowledge, for it was the latter who was the blockhead, for not practicing a better system of instruction.' "

"The way pupils come into the room after recess becomes a source of worry to many teachers. It is the same old story here as elsewhere—inefficient government. There can be no neutral ground in discipline. Remember that, teachers. When your pupils are to come in after recess, don't leave them to straggle in at their own good pleasure. You should be on the ground and see that every one is in line before they begin to march in. Of course you must form lines and have system. Not to do so is to court trouble. If left to themselves some insolent boy will lag behind and give you much worry in correcting him.

"It is the same with regard to dismissing the school at any time. If strict discipline is not maintained, great disorder will result. In some of the old back-district schools, I have known the boys to yell at the tops of their voices when the teacher called out 'Dismissed!' Then some of them would run up the log wall, like squirrels, to put their books out of reach, while others made a rush for the door. Often small children were crowded aside, or trampled upon. Of course when it got too bad, the teacher was forced to call a halt and subdue the most impetuous stampeders. But how much better to take a little care, in the first place, and have the pupils march out

in orderly lines! The slipshod and utterly inefficient ways of some teachers are to me unaccountable. I confess that they are a puzzling mystery.

“I fear that something like the above still exists in some district schools. It may not be so bad, but I am sure an improvement could be made. If pupils produce too much noise and behave improperly in going out, it is your duty to stop them and have them wait till the others are gone. Then you may let them go. This generally has the right effect. They are too anxious to get away to take any serious risk of being detained. Of course you must see that every child has its books, and wraps, and dinner-bucket before the school is dismissed. You may have monitors appointed to bring in all necessary articles.

“I have even known teachers to be careless in the seating of their pupils. They allow them to change seats without permission or upon slight pretexts. Their pupils leave their seats at will and go gadding about the room on any sort of trifling errand. Such teachers need expect nothing but worry and trouble. The wonder is that they are able to teach at all.

“If permitted to do so, pupils easily fall into a bad habit of borrowing pencils, paper, books, and other materials that every child should keep in supply. I have seen boys who would make no pretense of keeping paper, and, whenever this article was suddenly needed, they would not hesitate to call for five or six leaves out of a companion's tablet. Such impositions should not be tolerated. Besides, the practice produces much disorder, for the teacher is constantly annoyed with requests for permission to borrow these things.

“If the teacher requires one thing to be done in decen-

cy and in order, this has its effect in the doing of other things, and in the doing of all things. By requiring it in all cases, correct order soon becomes a habit in the school and then discipline should be very easy.”



CHAPTER XIII.

Character Building.

The subject of character building was discussed at one of the meetings. Some young teachers, at first, thought this to be out of the line of school management, but, before the meeting closed, they saw their mistake. It was made clear that one of the main objects of discipline is the building of character. In fact, all education has for its object the formation of moral character, according to some of the very highest authority on educational doctrine. Let any teacher who is interested in this line read the educational philosophy of Herbart, or the writings of his leading representative in this country, Dr. De Garmo of Cornell University.

But we must turn to the discussion and follow at least a part of the argument. Professor Brewster, the president of a prominent normal school, said:

“When we come to consider the true purpose of education, everything else pales into insignificance before the claim of soul development, or character building. The claims of the body must, indeed, be met, but what would the physical man be without the spiritual man? To speak plainly, he would be only a beast. The bread-and-butter side of education has its place, but to put it in the lead is low and debasing. Material wealth without intellectual wealth is mean and groveling. A human being who has not been developed spiritually, or intellectually, is not

capable of enjoying even the material goods of life. Such a one is one-sided and mentally dwarfed. It is only the perfectly developed and all-round man that is prepared for all the vicissitudes of life, and is able to make the best of all his opportunities, and enjoy the full measure of existence."

"True," said a lady teacher from the schools of a leading city, "but I fear a great many teachers, not to speak of lay members in education, do not understand this subject of character building. When you begin to talk of developing character, they think at once of Scripture texts and moral homilies. They are right, so far as they go, but they do not go far enough. Their view of moral character is very contracted. Some persons seem to make morals the same as religion. While they are necessarily closely associated they are not synonymous. The persons referred to associate moral character only with Sunday schools and church service. They do not see that it must enter, as well, into the daily life of every one. The business man shows forth character in his daily work. So with the farmer, the lawyer, the trader, and others. The child develops character in the way it studies and recites. It may acquire honesty and industry in the performance of all its school duties, or it may learn to shirk and cheat and deceive. Woe to the teacher who 'causes one of these little ones to offend' by even carelessly, or negligently failing to develop an honest and diligent spirit in the child. The teacher may so teach and discipline her pupils as to lead them to use deception, to copy exercises, to forge answers to problems, or to steal a glance at the book while reciting. The teacher's whole system of discipline may tend to tear down true character instead

of building it up. How many of us have seen this in both the school and the family? In many schools and families, if any children are good, it is only because of innate tendency, and in spite of the guidance, or discipline, which is supposed to be put forth for their moral development. Many of these blind guides are immoral themselves. How then can they lead others into paths of right doing? How can they build up, in others, sweet and beautiful lives, when they themselves are full of unholy desires and wicked impulses?"

The principal of an academy said, "No human activity is neutral as to moral quality. All conduct is either right or wrong. It leads to good or it leads to evil. The idea among some modern teachers that intellectual education and moral education are to be divorced is an awful mistake. It is fraught with great evil and is responsible for the great looseness and instability of public morals in the present day. The corruption in political and official life, and in positions of financial trust, can be traced largely to defective moral training in our common schools. The idea that moral training can be omitted from the child's education is preposterous. One could hardly believe that such a sentiment exists, did he not come across it frequently in our modern educational practice. To set about teaching old-fashioned morality seems to be taken by some teachers as a little out of date, to say the least of it. More is the pity.

"Keep in mind that moral training consists of something more than goody-goody talks and moral lectures. The child must be made to feel the moral force of every word and act and thought. It must be made to feel its moral obligation towards its fellows, and towards society,

and towards its Creator. All evil and ignoble passions and feelings such as envy, and jealousy, and selfishness, it must be taught to banish."

"How shall we carry your advice into practice?" inquired a young teacher.

"Begin by making right action a habit," said the speaker, "and continue in the same line. Of course the child is first taught what is right action. Every time it performs a right act, the easier it is to do right again. By continuing to do right, such action finally becomes so firmly grounded that to do right is easier than to do wrong.

"The training of the will is the fundamental thing. In its earlier life the child's will is naturally subject to that of the parent, the teacher, and other superiors. As it grows older it should be taught self-reliance and it must finally become its own guide. How important then that it shall be subject to the best moral influences, and possess a true knowledge of right, and enjoy the overpowering direction of firmly established moral habits.

"I know a man who was brought up with such strong antipathy to drinking saloons that in all his life he naturally shunned them as he would a plague infected house. He often said that he fully believed that this strong impression so early fixed had saved him from becoming a drunkard. How important then that right habits and sentiments shall be firmly implanted in early life!

"The responsibility of the teacher in the matter of forming the child's character is something fearful to contemplate. The parent's share is, of course, as great. But after the child has passed from under the care of teacher and parent its character may be said to have been

fixed for life. It is well known, as already indicated, that character is the result of habits and that habits are fixed in childhood and youth. At least they rarely originate in mature life. Whatever we are at from twenty to thirty years of age, we shall be, with few exceptions, all the rest of our lives. After that we find it next to impossible to change our set ways of thinking and doing things. The trouble is that we have no desire to do so. Like soft plaster the plastic habits of early life soon become hardened and fixed forever. All persons who have attained to any degree of advanced age know how hard it is to throw off a habit contracted in early life. It may be so simple a thing as some slight inaccuracy of speech. The impression of it on the tablets of the brain is so hardened and fixed that the fault is ever reproducing itself, to our chagrin, and when we are least expecting it.

“True it is that ‘youth is the seed-time of life.’ ‘As the twig is bent, the tree’s inclined.’ All these are maxims as precious as gold; and in the rush and roar of modern life and civilization we are apt to forget them, and even to half-way think them out of date, or obsolete. On such lines, it would be better to retrace our steps and mark the old paths in order that we may again walk therein.”



CHAPTER XIV.

The Psychological Basis of Character.

At one of the meetings, the psychological basis of character was up for discussion. The ablest talk was made by a noted psychologist. Among other things he said:

"Psychology as a study has made great progress during the last twenty-five years. The metaphysical feature of the subject has been, by degrees, laid aside and psychology may now be classed as a science. And yet it is a science only so far as the activities of the mind are concerned. No one can tell what mind really is now any more than before. The connecting link between mind and matter and the nature of consciousness still elude all attempts at scientific explanation, and it is not probable that they ever will come within the scope of scientific comprehension.

"And yet much has been done in clearing up the whole field of mental activities. The development of the intellectual powers in children has been closely studied in its application to education. It is the same with regard to the development of habits and character. The science of psychology is now the teacher's greatest support and no one can hope to be a first class teacher, at this day, without studying psychology in its relation to education."

"Please explain more definitely," said a middle-aged teacher back in the crowd, "or give an illustration."

"Well," continued the professor, "let us take the doc-

trine of apperception which was so elaborated and cleared up by Herbart. His doctrine is, that we obtain and appreciate new ideas by what is already in the mind as much as by the perception of the object itself. The perception of a new flower, for example, is in the mind of the botanist, very different from what it is in the mind of a florist. The former sees its structural form as regards some class, and its relation to all that he has learned scientifically with regard to flowers and plants. The florist sees it in respect to its commercial value based upon its power to please. An ignorant person would probably get little idea at all from it. The idea of each individual is moulded and colored by his individual knowledge and the application which he is accustomed to make of this knowledge.

“So the teacher, in assigning a lesson for study, prepares the mind of the child by preliminary information which assists in apperceiving, or comprehending, the principles to be learned in the new lesson.

“Likewise in the formation of character, the child is influenced by what is already in his mind, and the direction it has given to his thoughts. Under certain conditions, or temptations as we usually say, the action of children will differ according to what already in the mind is bearing upon the point in question.

“Hence the necessity of good companions for the child, who will not fill its mind with wrong sentiments. Hence, also, the necessity of good books instead of bad books for the same reason. Say what you please; it does make a difference as to what the mind feeds upon, for this must give tone to its constitution, and determine the impression made by new knowledge and the character of the result-

ing ideas. This is not an abstruse doctrine. It is what everybody knows who thinks clearly.

“And yet there are persons who claim that the minds even of the young may feed upon vicious materials without receiving detriment. They even express no objection to a boy’s ‘sowing his wild oats.’ I once heard a minister, in private conversation, excuse the wild conduct of some students who were under his charge on the plea of youthful necessity. There are more people than we generally suppose who are inclined to excuse the peccadillos of youth under this same excuse of ‘sowing wild oats.’

“It is a great mistake; fellow teachers, to make any such allowance. The doctrine of a conservation of energy, or a correlation of forces, applies in the science of mind as well as in the science of matter. An immoral action is the result of psychic action which leaves its record in the cells of the brain and produces a tone in one’s mental activities which is permanent. This remains as a governing factor in the character, and even in case of reform it is still a latent force which lies ready to betray its subject in some unguarded moment of temptation.

“This may be illustrated by the old story of a father who asked his son to drive a number of nails into a post. He then asked the son to draw out the nails. The latter did this. ‘Now,’ said the father, ‘draw out the holes which the nails made.’ The son, of course, found it impossible to comply with this request. ‘Neither,’ said the father, ‘can you eradicate the effect of a wrong deed. You may be forgiven for it, but the nail-hole is always there.’

“There is a physical basis for character as well as a

psychical basis. Every impression made through the sensory nerves which results in consciousness is recorded in the brain, and every act of will comes from an order recorded in the brain. All psychical activities, therefore, have a material side as well as a spiritual side. This material side it is that is always trying to drag the spiritual nature down. It is especially so with those who have once indulged in vice and have reformed. The old tendencies built up in the nervous system are at war with the new impulses for good. 'The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.' The Apostle Paul felt it when he exclaimed, 'I find then the law, that to me who would do good, evil is present.' Even Paul could not escape the abiding effect of past sins that had left their impress in his physical nature.

"The reckless youth who thinks he will 'enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season' has little idea of what chains he is forging for himself. He intends, by and by, to reform, but habit becomes so grounded in his nature that the chances are against such action. His nature is changed and his will is changed. The physical organs of mental action have been hardened in lines of evil action and offer almost insuperable barriers to change. Even when a reform is effected, the fixed tendencies of action make constant efforts to reassert themselves and only the most constant watchfulness and the most heroic efforts can prevent a relapse from rectitude.

"How important then to keep a clean record and to build up from earliest life a set of tendencies that will always clamor for right action. We see the folly and the danger of even the least indulgence in wrong. Every teacher should fully appreciate this and seek to establish the character of every pupil on a solid and impregnable basis."

CHAPTER XV.

General Observations on Discipline.

The reports already made, of cases of discipline discussed by the club, are perhaps sufficient. The experience of the various speakers is doubtless enough varied to meet the demands of all young teachers who are seeking guidance in their work. So I may close with a few observations on discipline in general.

It is a trite saying that poets are born and not made. So it is with teachers. If one has not at least a rudimentary talent for governing a school, it is not probable that such a talent can be acquired. Yet, when possessed even in a small degree, it may be greatly improved. Every teacher may improve his ability to govern a school by cultivating it and studying methods. He will gain much by observing how other teachers govern their schools. He may also get much by conference with teachers, and lectures and discussions in teachers' clubs, or institutes.

In order to govern well, it is, first, necessary to command respect? The teacher must have character. The children under the teacher's charge, and, in fact, everybody must have confidence in him. There must be a bearing or manner which commands respect. We are all conscious of this fact. We have seen examples of it all our lives.

The teacher who would control others must, also, have a loving heart. If children feel that you are unselfish,

it gives you an additional power over them. Selfishness begets selfishness and repels the outreaching sympathies of child nature. It is, of course, possible for the better nature of a pupil to be so crushed out by a perverted life that he is not open to good influences. And yet such cases must be rare, if they exist at all. There is most likely an open door to the better impulses of the most depraved heart, if only we have wisdom enough to reach it.

Self-poise and dignified bearing have much to do with successfully governing a school. We are well aware that these personal qualities make a deep impression in all the associations of life. The man or woman who is always well-balanced and makes no social blunder, commands our lasting respect. The same quality in the teacher gives her a strong influence over her pupils. The teacher who is boisterous, loud-voiced, and is easily made angry, or impatient, will exert a poor influence over her school.

To discipline a school well, it is necessary to understand human nature thoroughly. Some persons are so gifted in this respect that they can play upon the human heart as an organist plays upon the keys of his instrument. When they desire to produce a certain effect—sound a certain note—they touch a well-known key. They see the connection between cause and effect in the realm of mind the same as the scientist sees it in the realm of matter and force. The successful teacher recognizes the various differences in child nature and deals with each according to the demands of its individuality.

To have a well-ordered school, the teacher must recognize the rights of the pupils. She must feel that she is dealing with little men and women. The further she can

get from the usual "school" attitude towards her pupils, the better. This is an abnormal attitude which is responsible for many of the teacher's troubles and difficulties.

It is better always to request than to command. None of us like to feel obliged to act at the unsympathetic order of another. A little reflection teaches us that the pupil will always respond with greater alacrity to a kindly spoken request. In fact a request may be so kindly put that it is almost irresistible. What is gentler and yet what is stronger than a kindly spoken word?

It is best, also, not to threaten, or even to speak of what you will do, if you are not obeyed. The best disciplinarians never talk of obedience. They make no formal lectures on the beauty of good order and good conduct. All this is taken for granted, and to request children to behave has a very weakening effect. The question of behavior is never to be debated.

Of course a multiplicity of rules is bad. Many of your rules will only serve to awaken a temptation to break them. Children generally know what is right and what is wrong. The general moral code covers most of their conduct. Other requirements may be enjoined as their necessity develops. Be careful not to require anything without due consideration. It is unfortunate to have to reverse a command. All rules should be just and necessary and then they should be carried out without fail.

And yet there is such a thing as governing too much. Consider the object of government. The primary object is to enable the pupils to do best work. Disorder interferes with work. Therefore have just such order as will promote the best work.

Of course there is still another object in discipline.

The virtue of proper obedience should be learned by all in early life. It is necessary to good citizenship, and in all the walks of life. The art of obedience is a necessary part of every one's education.

To secure order, many teachers depend upon drill, or system, in all movements, as for example in calling classes, or in dismissing the school. This is absolutely necessary in handling large bodies of pupils, as in city schools. There such drill movements are just as necessary as they are in an army. Otherwise there would be hopeless confusion. This feature of discipline may be abused. Then the principal of the school becomes a martinet and makes discipline an object in itself and not a means. Thus individuality is crushed out and the school becomes the "machine" about which we hear so much,

Successful discipline demands a close attention to details. The time to stop the leak in a dyke is when it first begins. It is the same with disorder in school. Some teachers think a little looseness of conduct may be overlooked, and almost before they are aware of it the control of the school has passed from their hands. Be just as firm in your discipline on the first day as at any other time, and vary at no time, if you aspire to a successful management of your school.

Put no dependence upon competition for prizes. The contest soon narrows down to a few pupils, and the rest are not affected by the reward, unless it be unfavorably. Prizes stir up criticism, jealousy, and charges of favoritism. If you give rewards, make it possible for every pupil to be worthy of them. It is better, though, to give none at all. Pupils should be taught to do right for the right's sake and not from any mercenary motive.

Perhaps the best way of all to have a well-ordered school is to keep every pupil busy. This does not mean that you are to give artificial and meaningless tasks. That would be as bad as doing nothing. The work must be in the legitimate line of their studies. It may be some valuable collateral work like private reading, for information, in suitable books. Study each child's individual bent of mind and adapt the work so far as possible to that.

To allow children to play in the school-room, is one great source of disorder. They should be taught to hold the school-room in respect, something as they do the church. The reader may have noticed the great difference in the way people bear themselves in different churches. When the minister and leading members are silent, and reverential, and respectful in the church, a solemn stillness and holy awe seems to pervade the entire congregation. So it may be, to a certain degree, with regard to order in the school-room. Children should always be trained to feel that nothing boisterous, or unseemly must occur there.

And finally the teacher should not fail to create a spirit of pride in the school. Every pupil should feel that the honor of the school rests, in great part, upon him. He should recognize the fact, that bad conduct on his part is, not only a personal disgrace, but a dishonor to the school. In many ways the teacher may inculcate this school spirit. The children may be assisted in decorating the school-room, or in planting trees in the yard. The latter may be made an occasion of much note. An orator may be chosen, and songs prepared, with other

appropriate exercises. With proper management, the pupils will always feel proud that they are members of the school, and this counts for much both to them and to the teacher.



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